

SPECIAL EDITION

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

June 2025



Picture: Imago Mundi

“I was chosen, without any merit of my own. Now, with fear and trembling, I come to you as a brother, who desires to be the servant of your faith and joy, walking with you on the path of God’s love. He wants us all to be united in one family..”

—POPE LEO XIV

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW HOLY FATHER — PAGES 9–12

Sister Sunshine marks 70 years of religious life... with a smile!

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

SISTER Mary of the Ascension, affectionately known as Sister Sunshine, is congratulated by Archbishop Nolan following a Mass to mark her 70 years of devoted service to her order.

She took the name when she joined the Sisters of Nazareth in 1954 and it was in Nazareth House, where she has been a resident for a number of years, that she renewed her vows surrounded by family and friends at a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Archbishop Nolan.

A tribute to her, read out by a colleague, revealed that she got her nickname when she worked for many years in South Africa caring for the elderly and those with complex needs.

Volunteers

One her first tasks, with the help of volunteers, was to transform a ramshackle hut into a community hub which became known as the Sunshine Cabin and locals soon started calling her 'Sister Sunshine'.

In 1981 she returned to the UK and worked in Nazareth Houses throughout the country before returning to Glasgow in 2003 where she took up a new role in pastoral care until her retirement.

The tribute concluded: "Sister Mary's life is a testament to love and compassion and a caring heart.

"Her joyful spirit and genuine kindness leave a lasting impression on all and we



would like to thank her for her commitment and dedication to our congregation for 70 years but most especially in serving our Lord

throughout her life."

Among those taking part in the celebrations to mark her Platinum Jubilee of religious life were her sister

Cynthia, who is also a resident in Nazareth House, Cardonald. One of her nephews, Father Paul, is a priest in Dublin.

Franciscans' final gift to Tommy



THE Franciscan community of John Duns Scotus in the Gorbals was able to honour devoted parishioner Tommy Traynor with a rarely given medal to mark more than 70 years of service just weeks before his death.

BY BRIAN SWANSON

he first met his beloved wife Rena, he was 18, and she was 17.

From then on, for both of them, Tuesday night was Novena night.

"As the years passed, Tommy became more involved with the St Anthony Novena and had the privilege of reading the Novena prayers every Tuesday morning and evening. He also visited hospitals, family homes and care homes with Holy Communion and the St Anthony Relic.

"Until very recently each Thursday he still attended St Francis' Nursing Home taking the relic to patients and the staff.

"When we had the fire in the church some years ago, Tommy was responsible for ensuring the Novena continued unaffected, despite all the challenges. He was also involved in coordinating the meetings with the different people involved in restoring the church to how it looks today.

"After he retired, for the past 20 years or more, he was also a daily communicant, and served at most of those daily Masses as well as assisting the clergy at many funerals over that time. He will be greatly missed."

The medal, awarded on behalf of the Franciscan fraternity, was given to acknowledge Tommy's tireless contribution to the community until his passing last month, aged 88.

Lifelong friends of the retired electrician along with his extended family including his five grandchildren applauded as parish priest Caomhíomh O'Laoide handed Tommy his medal saying: "We all know how and why Tommy is special but this medal proves it - there are only ten other people who have one."

As well as the medal Tommy was also presented with a certificate "in grateful recognition of many years of dedicated and generous support given to the life and ministry of the fraternity of Friars Minor and the Franciscan fraternity in Glasgow."

His son in law, Martin O'Neill, said: "When Tommy was 15 years old, he first started attending the St Anthony Novena. There

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Archbishop's papal hotline



If anyone asks Archbishop Nolan if he has a hotline to the Pope... the answer is yes!

The link emerged on the day following Pope Leo's election when the Archbishop recalled having spoken on the phone with the new Pope when he was Cardinal Prevost a few months ago.

The Archbishop used the mobile number he had for the new Pope to send a greeting from the Catholics of Glasgow – and much

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

to his surprise received a message of thanks shortly afterwards!

Archbishop Nolan said: "Although I have never met the new Pope we did speak on the phone a few months back and I found him very pleasant and friendly."

"He had called the Archdiocesan offices and when I wasn't in he left his mobile number for me to call him

back, which I did.

"I assumed that the officials would have taken his phone from him after his election as Pope, but I sent off a message of congratulations in the off chance that he would eventually be reunited with his mobile phone.

Delighted

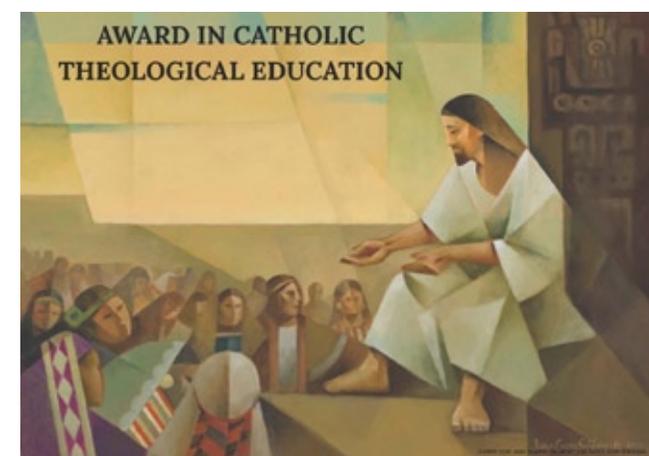
"I was very touched and delighted to receive a message back from the new Pope a short time after-

wards thanking us for our prayers for him."

The new Pontiff is very much at home with technology and keeps in touch with his brothers and their families and friends from round the world by mobile phone. Before his election he also had an X/Twitter account which he used to comment on events and he also uses his device to play 'Wordle' the popular daily word quiz run by the *New York Times* online edition.



Make a date for new Catechist course



Invite the Turin shroud to your parish!

THIS faithful copy of the Shroud of Turin, based at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Balornock is being made available to those who want to learn more about one of the most intriguing artefacts in Christianity.

The replica is owned by parishioner Henry James Creechan, 54, who designed and built the glass cabinet in which it is kept.

For almost two decades the former maths and physics teacher, who now runs his own kitchen and bathroom design company, has given lectures about the history, scientific background and religious significance of the Holy Shroud.

He has visited schools, parishes and faith groups and last year even arranged for it to be displayed during the Edinburgh festival at St Patrick's Church in the Cowgate – the final resting place of the Venerable Margaret Sinclair.

His fascination with the Holy Shroud, which is kept in Turin Cathedral and believed by many to be the linen cloth in which the crucified Christ was

Picture by Paul McSherry



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

wrapped and which bears his image, goes back to his

school days.

Henry James, who is married with three grown up children said: "I first heard about the shroud from RE lessons and I was captivated by it right from the start."

"Many years later I was in a bookshop in Glasgow and picked up a book on it that fascinated me. So I went on the internet and found a real, life-size replica. I couldn't believe it – so I got

it sent over from America and after seeing the quality was good I figured I could do something with it."

He told *Flourish*: "I want as many people as possible to view Scotland's 'Holy Shroud' replica as the current scientific method, so often claimed to be at odds with faith and religion, has been the very means by which the Shroud of Turin has now been confidently affirmed to be the authentic burial cloth that wrapped Christ in the tomb some two millennia ago."

"This sacred cloth is a

comprehensive 'real time' chronicle of the pathology of Our Lord's indescribable sufferings and can only bring us closer to a deeper gratitude and love of His Sacred Heart."

He added: "I'm extremely grateful to our parish priest Fr Mark Morris for allowing me to keep the replica throughout the year and for his full support and encouragement in this religious endeavour."

■ If you would like the Turin Shroud replica to visit your school or parish, contact: hccreechan@blueyond.co.uk

WOULD you like to learn more about Catholic theology, and put it to use in your own community? Then put a date in your diary for this month.

A special information evening for the Award in Catholic Theological Education is taking place on Thursday 19th June at 7pm in the Archdiocesan offices at Clyde Street. And the Award Course Committee have an important message, feel free to come along and find out more with no obligation!

The Award is a two-year course in Catholic Theological Education which is supported by the University of Glasgow. It is designed to help people to better understand their faith, and communicate it to others. Many people have followed the course and gone on to be of great service to their parishes in the Archdiocese as catechists.

The course costs £930 per year and this cost is usually shared between the participant and his/her parish (£465 each).

The schedule is demanding but enriching.

The two-year programme consists of eight 'modules' of seven weeks each with classes one night per week and a Saturday 'workshop' day, home reading and re-

lection, class discussion and tutor input.

The Award from Glasgow University is made after completion of the course and then commissioning by the Archbishop as a Catechist.

Year One sees study of Scripture (New Testament), Introduction to Theology, Moral Philosophy and Theology, Dogma (Understanding Jesus and Understanding the Church) and Catechesis.

Year Two has courses in Scripture (Old Testament), Dogma 2 (Creation, Salvation, Sin and Grace etc), Sacraments, Liturgy and Catechesis.

Canon Anthony Gallagher, Parish Priest of St Catherine's and Director of Religious Education for the Archdiocese said: "This course is now in its 15th year and has enriched the Archdiocese's parishes with hundreds of catechists. These committed men and women are involved in so many activities and initiatives, they are a real source of hope and life in the Church."

"We already have interest in next year's course, so if you are interested in learning more about the Faith and want to be of service in your parish, come along on Thursday 19th June."

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St Bernadette's marks 75 years of faith and friendship

A WARM welcome and a trip down memory lane greeted Archbishop Nolan when he joined parishioners, past and present, and members of the clergy at a Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the 75th anniversary of St Bernadette's, Carnytnye.

Joining him were Father John Gannon, Father Frank McKendry, Parish Priest Father Alex Strachan and Deacon Kenny McGeachie.

In his homily the Archbishop encouraged those present to learn from the past and look to the future as he warmly praised those whose unwavering faith was responsible for the founding of the parish and was still evident today.

Then it was time to sit back and watch a reel of old home movies, videos and photographs of church events going back to the early days of the parish.



BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

Fr Strachan said: "Saint Bernadette's parish is known for its friendly and relaxed atmosphere and this was certainly true on the night of the celebrations.

"Our thanks go to Archbishop Nolan and everyone else who made this a very happy and joyful jubilee.

"During the Mass we prayed for our former priests and religious who had served in the parish former parishioners and our local and multinational

newcomers.

"It was good to welcome back the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception who had served the parish for some years and also to greet the Sisters of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus who joined us from Nigeria in March."

Seminarians learn importance of sign language

THE next generation of priests studying at the Royal Scots College in Salamanca have been encouraged by Father Paul McAlinden, Archdiocesan chaplain to the deaf, to cater for their needs in their future ministry.

Father Paul, Parish Priest at St Augustine's Milton, was invited to the College by the recently-appointed Rector, Fr John Carroll, former parish priest of St Mary Immaculate, Pollokshaws, who took up his new role in Spain earlier this year.

Fr Paul said: "I had a very fruitful visit and I'm very grateful to Fr Carroll for the opportunity.

"There were six students from a variety of dioceses and I spent three days with them offering an understanding to the Deaf Community, to British Sign Language SL and an



Fr Paul McAlinden

overview of Liturgical Sign Language.

"We reviewed a recorded Mass at St Augustine's and sang hymns, parts of the Mass and learned the general responses within the Liturgy. Fr Carroll, told me that the students really enjoyed this learning experience and hope to pursue and continue this as they journey through seminary

"I thought it important to give the students some input into our work with the deaf community in the hope that it might inspire them to keep an interest in it during their seminary training and once ordained employ it in their ministry.

"It is also part of the initiative of the Archdiocese on Evangelisation and gives assurance to the deaf

community that we are doing what we can to include them in the pastoral care of the Archdiocese."

Giving examples of that pastoral care he added: "A couple of weeks ago we had seven deaf people attend our 12 noon Mass and around 18 adult hearing helpers who assist with the ministry to the deaf.

"With the help of the Archdiocese Evangelisation Fund we also subsidised an overnight retreat in Cumbernauld. It was lovely to have some time to spend together and to focus on the spiritual development of our group.

"At Easter we had a reflection in St Augustine's explaining the significance of the Easter Triduum and after the summer we will be planning for the year ahead with a variety of events, Masses, and gatherings.

New record for Archdiocesan social media

THE extraordinary impact of social media in modern life is reflected in new figures released showing record engagement with the Archdiocese's streams.

The combination of the death of Pope Francis and the conclave which elected Pope Leo saw views of the

RCAG facebook page soar.

The day of the Pope's death saw 150,000 views and the total number of viewers for the 90 days around the event was 1.4 million.

The Archdiocesan X/Twitter feed also saw a surge in interactions with 28,000 impressions for the single

tweet announcing the death of Pope Francis and 35,000 for the news 'Habemus Papam'.

Director of Communications, Ronnie Convery said: "It is heartening to see such numbers being reached directly by the Church. It is important for people to be

able to get news about the Church directly, without filters or distortions.

"Social media allows us to engage with people who might never come to a church but who retain a fascination for faith, and as such it is a powerful tool of evangelisation."



Prisoners, professors and parishioners will feature in the visit of the Papal Nuncio

Glasgow is set to be the first diocese in Scotland to welcome the Nuncio of Pope Leo for a pastoral visit.

The papal ambassador, officially known as the Apostolic Nuncio, represents the Holy Father to the Church in Britain.

The current Nuncio is Spanish-born Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía (left) who was appointed by Pope Francis but who will visit Glasgow for the first time as the official representative of Pope Leo XIV.

Archbishop Nolan and staff at the Archdiocese have worked closely with the Nuncio's team in London to ensure a weekend of encounters and experiences which will give the Nuncio a good flavour of life in the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

The centrepiece will be celebration of Mass in the Cathedral on Sunday June 22 at 12 noon followed by the Corpus Christi procession in Croy that afternoon.

But the Nuncio will also get a taste of other aspects of Church life too during his

visit. On Monday June 23 he will visit Barlinnie Prison to meet staff, chaplains and inmates. Later that day there will be an ecumenical meetings and a tour of the old Glasgow Cathedral in High Street.

The following day he will meet the Carmelite Sisters

in Dumbarton after a visit to SCIAF's new offices in the Archdiocesan Curial Offices.

Among his other scheduled appointments are a meeting with youth leaders, a tour of Glasgow University and a Mass with clergy at the Cathedral.

MEET THE NUNCIO

Sunday 22nd June

■ **The Nuncio will preside at the 12 noon Mass in Saint Andrew's Cathedral. All welcome**

■ **The Nuncio will lead the Blessed Sacrament Procession in Croy which begins with a welcome at Holy Cross Church at 3.45 pm, followed by the Eucharistic Procession through the Village from 4.00 pm, returning to the Church for Benediction around 5.15 pm. All welcome**

Monday 23rd June

■ **The Nuncio will celebrate the 1.00 pm Mass in Saint Andrew's Cathedral with the clergy and religious of the Archdiocese. All welcome**

Scotland's first female SSVP president marks a year in office with new hopes

In June 2024 I was elected as the first female National President for the Society of St Vincent de Paul Scotland (SSVP Scotland).

In Scotland women were only admitted to the Society in the 1970s. Although it has taken almost 50 years for the National President to be a woman it's simply a reflection of our current membership which is 47% male and 53% female.

At the start of my presidency I attended SSVP England and Wales' Annual Meeting. What a revelation!

They have over 300 staff, serving 9000 members/volunteers and welcome everyone from the wider Christian family to assist them in their works. I had taken over with only two staff working 30 hours each and one working 10 hours. Needless to say, the support of our fellow Vincenians down south was, and continues to be, invaluable.

In August, SSVP Scotland held its Annual National Meeting. This served as a crucial platform for reflection and future planning. A key aspect was taking a critical look at our current status and sharing information on our membership demographics, the ways in which the Society engages with modern technology and how we respond to the changing needs of those we seek to serve.

To support and assist our Trustees, who also have the



Tricia meets singer Barbara Dickson (right) at Prisoners' Week event

BY TRICIA MCCARTNEY

role of the SSVP Diocesan Presidents, a small working group of five enthusiastic and willing members now meets regularly. The members of this group came forward from four different dioceses in answer to the call of 'Where are You?', the theme of our national meeting.

Their personal commitment, combined with the different skills and expertise they offer, is invaluable... truly a gift of the Holy Spirit. More small working groups will be needed as other priorities are identified.

Anyone reading this article – whether as a SSVP member or a parishioner – is invited to reflect on what they could offer to support

the Society in its work. Everyone has something to offer even if they don't realise it!

Looking back on my first year undoubtedly there have been challenges. Not least the number of changes at trustee, diocesan and national office level including, sadly, the death at the age of 55 of one of our trustees/Diocesan Presidents. He is still greatly missed. Thankfully amidst all these changes one constant is Sr Maria, our Spiritual Director.

There also have been staffing changes which resulted in my having to spend a considerable time in our national office. Things are now settling into a more steady state with three new appointments having been made – a Finance /Administration Manager, a part time bookkeeper and a Na-

tional Youth Development Coordinator.

This is exciting and a positive sign of change as each are bringing with them a wealth of new ideas and ways of working.

There are three important ways in which someone can support the Society – financially, personally, and spiritually. My aim is to secure the future of SSVP Scotland, whilst being faithful to its past.

'Serviens in spe' – 'Serving in hope' – is the SSVP international motto. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, that virtue will be much needed and practised in the months and years ahead.

■ **Why not get in touch and find out more? Contact: SSVP Scotland, 113 West Regent Street Glasgow G2 2RN. www.ssvpscotland.com**

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Mass with Lady Elish marks an ecumenical milestone for Scotland

Picture by Paul McSherry



A HISTORIC moment in the history of ecumenism happened yesterday as the King's representative to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, was warmly received at a Catholic Mass.

Lady Elish Angiolini (above, right of Archbishop) was this year's Lord High Commissioner at the Kirk

assembly held in Edinburgh last month, the first Catholic ever to be appointed to the role. Indeed her nomination required an act of parliament to be revised to go ahead.

Parliament

Archbishop Nolan was joined by Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews and

BY **RONNIE CONVERY** Edinburgh who is the Catholic Church's representative at the General Assembly, the Chapter of Canons, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Provosts of neighbouring local authorities, the Lord Dean of Guild, Church leaders of various denominations,

and members of the armed forces at the packed Sunday evening Mass.

Archbishop Nolan used his sermon to highlight both the positive and negative lessons to be drawn from the occasion.

He said: "How far we have come from the days when Catholics were forbidden to attend services in Protestant

churches and vice versa. But we should bow our heads in shame that we ever acted like this while at the same time proclaiming ourselves to be followers of Jesus who said, "Love one another as I have loved you."

"It has taken us a long time to listen to those words and put them into practice."

The Archbishop also went

on to stress the link between public and private expressions of faith.

He said: "It is good that at this Mass, in the 850th year since Glasgow was named a Bishop's Burgh, representatives of civil and religious institutions come together showing how we both care deeply for the common good of our people."

Schools festival for Holy Year

A GLOBAL group of highly respected speakers – including First Minister John Swinney – were in Glasgow this month to deliver their vision of Catholic education at one of the most important faith conferences ever held in the city.

The first-ever Catholic Schools Festival, organised by the Scottish Catholic Education Service to mark the Jubilee Year, was described as 'a dynamic inspirational celebration'.

The landmark event brought together delegates from across Scotland, Ireland, England, Norway, the Netherlands, and Australia, and, say the organisers, marks a moment of international unity and shared mission in Catholic education.

Centered around the theme of "Our Journey

BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

of Hope", the festival celebrated the vital role Catholic schools play in forming young people, rooted in Gospel values and committed to building a more compassionate, just, and inclusive world.

The day-long conference at Caledonian University included a civic reception and a Mass in Saint Andrew's Cathedral celebrated by Archbishop Nolan, who is President for Education of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

The conference, which has been a year in the planning, attracted interest from all over Scotland from head teachers in Catholic schools, heads of RE departments and teachers who are beginning their careers.

Barbara Coupar, director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service told *Flourish*: "This festival was a celebration of everything that is life-giving and hopeful about Catholic education, a chance for us to come together – locally and globally – as communities of faith and learning, committed to the dignity of every person and to the service of the common good."

"The National Catholic Schools' Festival marks a significant milestone, and we hope that this will be the first of many such national gatherings in Scotland."

"As the Church and her schools look ahead to the Jubilee Year of 2025, this event offers a joyful and united witness to the enduring mission of Catholic education – a mission of love, truth, and hope."

Scottish Laity Network

Pope Leo XIV
Insights from the first month of his pontificate
~ with Massimo Faggioli

Thursday 19th June
7.00 - 8.30pm [UK Time]



OPEN HOUSE



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POPE Leo XIV – Insights from the first month of his pontificate... that's the title of an online talk with internationally renowned Catholic writer Massimo Faggioli on Thursday 19th June 7.00-8.30pm.

The Scottish Laity Network invites you to an evening with Massimo Faggioli who will help us to discern what

these early days are revealing.

Massimo is a professor in the department of theology and religious studies at Villanova University, which is the only Augustinian university in the United States. It is the university where Pope Leo XIV earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics in 1977 and received an hon-

orary Doctor of Humanities in 2014.

He is an internationally acclaimed writer on the Church, religion and politics, and his books and articles have been published in eight languages.

■ You can register for the session at <https://forms.gle/kjbvb26BMdKMjfS77>



Above: Volunteers tidy up Italian Cloister Garden
Right: Rando Bertoia with Archbishop Mario Conti in 2008

Remembrance day for Arandora Star

Italian Mass planned for Cathedral

A GLASGOW shopkeeper, who was the last survivor of the *Arandora Star* tragedy, and who was present at the opening of the Cathedral Cloister Garden, is to have his anniversary marked as a National Day of Remembrance in his native Italy.

BY RONNIE CONVERY

knowledge of the tragedy and preserving the memory of the dead will now be held all over Italy.

Before that, though, the tragedy will be remembered in Glasgow next month, 85 years to the day since the sinking of the vessel.

Archbishop Nolan is brushing up his language skills to celebrate a special Mass in Italian at the Cathedral at 5.15 on July 2, in memory of all who perished in the sinking, and this will be followed by a blessing of the memorial, and laying of floral tributes in the Cloister Garden. The Mass is open to all.

The day will be marked on 11 October of each year, the date of the death of Rando Bertoia.

Rando ran a watchmaker's shop on Victoria Road for decades and was in the front row at the opening of the Italian Garden and *Arandora Star* monument in Glasgow in 2011.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Italian Parliament has recommended the special day in memory of the 446 Italian civilians who perished in the sinking of the *Arandora Star*, torpedoed by the German navy in the Atlantic on 2 July 1940.

Ceremonies, meetings and remembrance events, aimed at spreading

the tragedy and preserving the memory of the dead will now be held all over Italy.

The third will have a presentation of the personal details, biographies and images of the 94 men from Scotland who perished in the sinking.

The bringing together of the Italian Mass and the *Arandora Star* anniversary was the idea of the Italian Scotland charity which has organised the annual Italian Mass over the last 20 years.

Disaster

Raffaello Gonnella, who himself lost a grandfather in the disaster and now serves as one of the trustees of the charity, said: "We used to organise the Italian Mass with Archbishops Conti and Taraglia in November and then have a Mass for the *Arandora Star* victims in July.

"It seemed appropriate to bring the two occasions together – hopefully with the summer weather more people will be able to come along to the Mass for the Italian community, and at the same time, learn more about an event which left a profound impact on countless families across Scotland.

"We are deeply grateful to Archbishop Nolan for coming along to celebrate the Mass on this special anniversary."

Theology journey continues

THE newly formed Scottish Catholic Theology Forum scheduled its first conference in Glasgow this month.

The gathering's aim was to help participants to reflect on the idea of a synodal church in Scotland.

Set up under the leadership of Fr Tom Magill, the forum aims to promote dialogue, create a platform for theological reflection in the light of Vatican II, and foster a synodal spirit in the Church in which lay and ordained Catholics can listen and learn from one another.

Synodality

Some of its members have formal qualifications in theology, some don't.

The first session's focus was on how to get to a theology of synodality. The second session on synodality as a mark of the Church, and the third led by three

women, sharing their hopes for the Church.

Fr Magill said: "Baptism makes all of us children of God in equality and dignity. In Christ there is no male or female, slave or free, Gentile or Jew. All are one in Christ. Paul's teaching opens up ways to review questions

such as the role of women in ministry, and the relationship between the priesthood of all the faithful and the ordained ministry".

In a letter to Pope Leo, Cardinal Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops based at the Vatican, stressed the role of the

people of God in the synodal process: "Each person contributes... according to the charisms, vocations and ministries received."

The Cardinal said he looked forward to the Church's synodal journey continuing under the guidance of Pope Leo.



The synod on synodality at work

ST. MARGARET MARY'S CASTLEMILK



350th Anniversary Mass Friday 27 June, 7pm

We at St Margaret Mary's Church Castlemilk are hosting a Mass in honour of the 350th anniversary of the Sacred Heart's first manifestation to our patron Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque.

There will be light refreshments in our church hall after Mass and everyone attending will receive a copy of the Sacred Heart Door Shield as shown above (4ins sq) with the 12 promises made to St Margaret Mary shown on the reverse.

All are welcome to join us to mark this anniversary.

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Fifty acts of kindness mark St Helen's golden jubilee of service



THESE excited pupils of St Helen's Primary School, Condorrat, show their delight at meeting Archbishop Nolan during a Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the school's 50th anniversary.

And they couldn't wait to

BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURE BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

take part in an impromptu question and answer session with their special guest.

Earlier, staff and pupils past and present, along with families, friends, members of the clergy and senior representatives from North Lanarkshire education department gathered in Our Lady and St Helen's Church to celebrate the milestone anniversary.

Praising the staff for their unwavering commitment, Archbishop Nolan said: "When I visit schools on occasions like this I always like to ask the children what they like about school and they always tell me the same thing – that they feel safe, well cared for and appreciated by their teachers.

"And as I have seen for myself today St Helen's is a school that lives up to those Christian values as it has done for the past 50 years."

During the months of May



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and June the pupils from the school, which serves the communities of Condorrat and Westfield, are being encouraged to give something back to their community by carrying out 'Fifty Acts of Kindness' and holding a talent show to entertain fellow pupils.

Exhibition

Other events to mark the anniversary included a "Trip Down Memory Lane" exhibition, and a school trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park in June where where all staff and pupils will wear commemorative caps with a 50th anniversary logo designed by the children.

Giving the vote of thanks, head teacher Liz Kelly said: "Here in our St Helen's family we aim to create an environment where all children are happy and respected. Our Catholic ethos and Gospel values are at the heart of our school community."

Sanctuary service

JUSTICE & Peace Scotland invite you to Together for Sanctuary, a special ecumenical Christian worship service held as part of Refugee Festival Scotland.

Organised in partnership with SFAR (Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees), this gathering will bring together people of all backgrounds to stand in solidarity with those who seek sanctuary for a time of prayer, worship, music and reflection and will include speakers with lived experience of seeking safety and welcome.

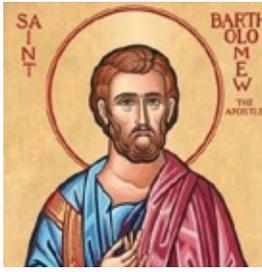
Join us on Thurs 19th June, Immaculate Conception Church, 2049 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 0AA, at 7pm.



The Legion of Mary Wayside Club



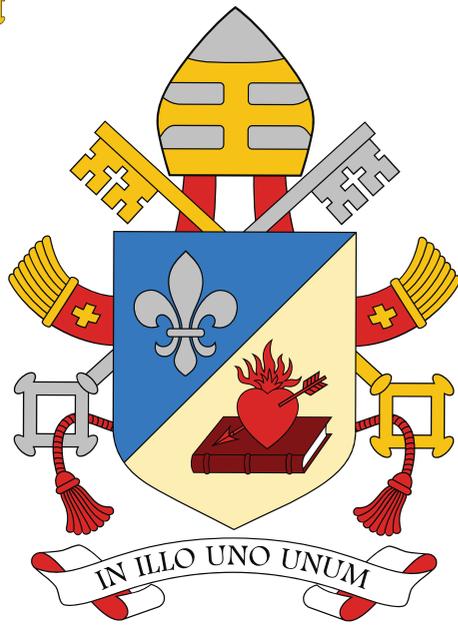
The members, volunteers and service users Of The Legion of Mary Wayside Club Would like to offer their congratulations, Prayers and very good wishes to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV




Your Holiness, Pope Leo XIV, we, the Catholic community of Castlemilk (St Bartholomew's and St Margaret Mary's) would like to take this opportunity to congratulate You on Your election as Pontiff and we offer our prayers together with Yours for world peace and unity in Christ.

WELCOME TO POPE LEO XIV

The new Pope's coat of arms reveals so much



POPE Leo XIV's coat of arms offers a clear reflection of his spirituality – symbols of the religious order to which he belongs, the Augustinians, and of his devotion to Our Lady.

The shield is divided diagonally into two sections. The upper half features a blue background with a white lily – the colour and symbol of the Madonna.

The lower half of the shield displays an image that recalls the Order of Saint Augustine: a closed book with a heart pierced by an arrow. This is a direct reference to the conversion experience of Saint Augustine, who described his personal encounter with God's Word using the phrase "You have pierced my heart with your Word."

Pope Leo XIV has kept

the motto which he used as a bishop – again reflecting the Augustinian tradition: *In Illo uno unum*, which means "In the One, we are one."

The phrase is taken from Saint Augustine's commentary on Psalm 127, where he explains that "although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one."

In a 2023 interview with Vatican News the then-

Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost spoke about the significance of this motto: "Unity and communion are truly part of the charism of the Order of Saint Augustine, and also of my way of acting and thinking. I believe it is very important to promote communion in the Church, so, as an Augustinian, for me promoting unity and communion is fundamental."

A life devoted to God, to study, and to care for the poor



Celebrating Mass in Rome

THE new Pope may wear his learning lightly, but he is a genuine intellectual with enormous pastoral experience.

After parish primary school in his native Chicago he went to the minor seminary of the Augustinian Fathers and then to Villanova University, in Pennsylvania, where in 1977 he graduated in mathematics.

Later the same year, in Saint Louis, he entered the novitiate of the Order of Saint Augustine, and made his first profession on September 2, 1978. On August 29, 1981 he took his solemn vows.

Priest

After graduating in theology, at the age of 27 he was sent to Rome to study canon law at the Angelicum. It was in Rome that he was ordained a priest, on June 19, 1982.

In 1987 he obtained his doctorate and was appointed director of vocations and director of the missions in Illinois.

But the following year he was sent to Peru and stayed in the Augustinian community there for 11 years when he held the positions of prior (1988–1992), director of formation (1988–1998), and teacher of the professed



Helping flood victims in Peru

BY **RONNIE CONVERY** (1992–1998), working also in the Archdiocese

of Trujillo as professor of Canon Law, Patristics and Morals at the major seminary.

In 1999, he was elected Prior Provincial of the Augustinian Province in Chicago, and two years later, he was elected as Prior General, the world head of his order, before being re-elected in 2007 for a second term.

In October 2013 he returned to Chicago for a year and was director of Formation at the convent of St. Augustine, until Pope Francis appointed him, on November 3, 2014, apostolic administrator of the Peruvian diocese of Chiclayo and at the same time titular Bishop of Suvar.

On November 7, he entered the diocese and was ordained bishop on December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Cardinal

On January 30, 2023, the Pope called him to Rome as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, promoting him to Archbishop. He was named a cardinal by Pope Francis on September 30 that year.

Throughout his ministry the new Pope has combined study with direct pastoral action, and was much loved as "Padre Roberto" in his diocese in Peru, where he was constantly on the move visiting his people.



WELCOME TO POPE LEO XIV

Getting to know our new Holy Father Pope Leo



As Pope Leo marks his first month in office, Flourish editor, **Ronnie Convery**, looks at the background and early activities of the new Pope as an indication of his likely priorities in the years ahead

Pope of Our Lady

FOR his first trip outside the Vatican, Pope Leo XIV chose to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano, just outside Rome.

The shrine is home to an ancient image of the Virgin Mary, which comes from Albania. Previously Pope Leo XIV had visited the shrine at every important juncture of his life, most recently as a cardinal, he had celebrated Mass at the shrine on 25 April 2024.

Pope Leo arrived in a Volkswagen multivan, seated in the front; he was greeted

by a cheering crowd of hundreds of people gathered in the square or looking out of windows and balconies.

Many shouted "Leo, Leo". Entering the church, where he greeted the Augustinian religious, the Pope stopped to pray, first in front of the altar and then in front of the image of Our Lady.

At the end, after saying a Hail Mary and singing the Salve Regina, the Pope addressed those who were in the church, greeting them and the people of Genazzano gathered outside: "I wanted so much to come here in

these first days of the new Ministry of carrying out the mission of Successor of Peter that the Church has entrusted to me."

And, recalling the visit he made after his election as Prior General of the Order of St Augustine, and his choice to 'offer his life to the Church', Leo XIV reiterated his 'trust in the Mother of Good Counsel', quoting the words addressed by Mary to the servants at the Wedding at Cana: 'Whatever she tells you, do it'.

Papal cross

THE pectoral cross worn by Pope Leo XIV carries within it fragments of bone from saints deeply connected to the Augustinian Order to which he belongs.

At the centre of the cross is a relic of Saint Augustine, the great Church Father. Alongside the relic are fragments from four other saints: Monica, Thomas of Villanova, Blessed Anselmo Polanco, and Venerable Giuseppe Bartolomeo Menochio.

The relics were chosen by Fr Josef Sciberras, Postulator General of the Augustinian Order, as a present from the Order to Cardinal Robert Prevost, when he was created cardinal on the 30th of September 2023.

Fr Sciberras said that Cardinal Prevost was "very moved" when the cross was given to him as he knew that he would be carrying close to his heart relics of both Saint Augustine and his mother, Monica.

"The day before the conclave," Fr Sciberras shared, "I sent him a message, en-

couraging him to wear the cross we had given him, for the protection of Saints Augustine and Monica. I don't know whether it was because of my message or not, but when I saw he was wearing it when taking the oath – and again when he stepped out onto the balcony of the basilica – I was deeply moved."



Pictures: Imago Mundi and Vatican News

The choice of name

WHAT'S in a name? The answer is, 'quite a lot' when it comes to the Papacy.

The new Pope's choice of Leo XIV has directed attention to the last Pope to choose that name, in the hope of finding clues to the new Pontiff's priorities.

Pope Leo XIII, born Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci on March 2, 1810, served as the head of the Church from 1878 until his death in 1903. His 25-year pontificate, the third-longest in history, was marked by a profound engagement with the modern world, earning him the title "the Pope of the working man."

In an era of rapid industrialisation and social upheaval, Leo XIII recognised the Church's need to address contemporary issues.

His most influential con-

tribution was the 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* ("New Things"), which laid the foundation for modern Catholic social teaching.

It emphasised the dignity of labour, the rights of workers to form unions, and the necessity of a just wage, while also affirming the right to private property. It sought a balanced approach between unbridled capitalism and socialism, advocating for the state's role in protecting the vulnerable.

Pope Leo XIII's pontificate was also deeply marked by his profound devotion to Our Lady earning him the title "The Rosary Pope."

He authored no less than 12 encyclicals on the Rosary,



to encourage the faithful to embrace this form of prayer as a means of spiritual renewal and protection. He instituted the custom of daily Rosary prayer during October and established the Feast of the Queen of the Holy Rosary in 1883.



The sporting Pope

LIKE his predecessor Pope Francis, Pope Leo XIV is a football fan and has a passion for one of the leading teams in Italy's Serie A.

One of his confreres at the Augustinian church in Florence, Fr Giuseppe Pagano, said: "When we travelled together we always had great fun. He is a person who wants to learn, he is interested in everything, he has

many hobbies, he loves driving the car, in fact he would drive for hours!

"He loves sports, in football he is a big fan of Roma. I heard from him after the Roma-Fiorentina match. I jokingly told him: 'Roma's victory is Pope Francis' first miracle.' The Pope is also believed to be a fan of the Chicago White Sox baseball team.

The new Pope is also known to be a keen tennis player, although he lamented that he had little time to practise his serve since being called to Rome to serve as the Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops.

Italian tennis star Jannik Sinner was one of his first visitors after his election. As Pope his practice sessions are likely to be even fewer!



NATURALLY enough, journalists covering the Vatican tend to seek out figures in the system from their own countries or language groups. French speakers seek out the French, Spanish speakers the Spaniards and Latin Americans, the Italians gravitate to their paesani, and, by the same logic, Americans are drawn to fellow Americans.

Thus it was that when Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was appointed the new head of the powerful Dicastery for Bishops in January 2023, my wife Elise and I made an appointment to drop by for a courtesy call in his Vatican office. I reminded him we'd met years before when he was the Prior General for the Augustinians, he told me that when he'd become the Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru he'd discovered a copy of my book on Opus Dei on a shelf in his new office, and we had a pleasant conversation.

Before we left, I made a vague offer to have Prevost over for dinner at our Roman apartment at some point. In the same non-specific way, he said he'd be delighted. Then, frankly, we all went our separate ways and forgot about it.

Flash forward to October 2024, during the concluding edition of the long-running Synod of Bishops on Synodality, when it occurred to Elise and I that we'd never followed up on our offer of a meal. We fired off an invitation, which Prevost kindly accepted, and so it was that one fall evening the future pope came to dinner.

We'd had cardinals over before... this is Rome, after all, where cardinals may not be a dime a dozen, but they're not exactly an endangered species either. In retrospect, that evening obviously looms infinitely

The night we invited the future Pope over to our house for dinner!

BY JOHN L ALLEN JR
EDITOR OF CRUX

larger now that this particular cardinal has become Pope Leo XIV.

I'll admit it: My initial instinct was to rush home and figure out which chair at our dining table he had used, which plate and silverware we had set out, and preserve it all as part of a permanent "pontifical dinner setting" with which we could dazzle future guests. It was gently suggested, however, that might smack just slightly of hucksterism.

To be clear, no deep dark secrets were shared that night – this was basically an amiable conversation among American expats. Still, on the Italian theory that you can learn more about a person over a meal than in virtually any other setting, here are three basic impressions I can pass along.

First, Prevost is a down-to-earth and unassuming personality. He arrived without any retinue and not in a Vatican sedan, but under his own power, and at no point did he ever give the impression he had somewhere more important to be. He seemed for all the world like a neighbor dropping by for a visit, not a potentate granting an audience.

Second, he's a kindly personal-



ity, sensitive to how his conduct and choices make others feel.

Case in point: I'd prepared a rather elaborate menu, which began with a shrimp cocktail featuring homemade sauce I'd whipped up with horseradish obtained from a Ukrainian store in town, then the classic Roman pasta dish *cacio e pepe*, followed by chicken al Marsala and *gelato*. He kept shoveling it down, and at a certain point I feared it might be a bit much and assured him he was under no obligation to eat everything.

He smiled and indicated that the way he was brought up, you eat everything your host puts in front of you, because to fail to clean your plate is disrespectful. To this day, I honestly can't tell you if he liked the food or was just being polite, but the cook in me appreciated the gesture anyway.

Third, and probably most importantly, the new pope is a great listener.

"Papa Prevost," as the Italians are already calling him, has that remarkable capacity all gifted communicators possess of making you feel like the most important person in the world while you're talking to him. He's almost a human vacuum cleaner, sucking in everything you say and then reflecting it back with keen questions and insights.

He's also skilled at not necessarily betraying what he thinks, preferring to draw others out rather than immediately revealing what's in his own mind. That doesn't come off as concealment, however, but a laudable (and increasingly rare) desire to think before he speaks.

One night, obviously, doesn't make us experts. But for what it's worth, the future pope who came to dinner struck us as smart, considerate, and a terrific conversationalist... and those qualities, at least, seem a reasonable basis for hope.

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WELCOME TO POPE LEO XIV

Messages of congratulations to the new Holy Father



AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM

Congratulations to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on the joyful occasion of his election as Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman Church.

With profound gratitude to God and in faithful communion with the Universal Church, we, the Parish Priest and faithful of St Barnabas' Church, Shettleston, rejoice in the election of Pope Leo XIV and offer our heartfelt prayers for wisdom, strength, and grace as he shepherds the Church in love and truth.

May the Holy Spirit guide Your Holiness in your sacred ministry, and may the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede for you always.

Fr. Chukwuemeka Vincent Livinus, SMMM & the parishioners of St Barnabas' Shettleston

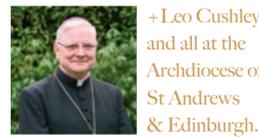
With heartfelt joy, we extend Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope' congratulations to Pope Leo.



From all in OUR LADY OF LOURDES Cardonald



We offer our congratulations, heartfelt prayers and support for Pope Leo XIV and his ministry as Chief Shepherd of the universal Church.



+Leo Cushley and all at the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh.

WELCOME TO POPE LEO XIV

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WELCOME TO POPE LEO XIV

The parish family of Sacred Heart and Saint Lucy's Cumbernauld pray that the ministry of our new Pope will bring glory to God, growth to God's people and happiness to himself.



Parish family of Sacred Heart and Saint Lucy's

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Holy Cross

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Congratulations

from



to our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, on his election and with the assurance of our prayers and service

Missio Scotland, the Pontifical Mission Societies, is the Pope's official means of helping Catholics to be aware of the unity and universality of the Church and to assist the young and growing Church in mission countries

www.missioscotland.com



Fr Vincent Lockhart, national director, meeting Pope Leo on 22 May in the Vatican

In his address to national directors from 120 countries on 22 May, Pope Leo thanked them and said, "The Pontifical Mission Societies are the 'primary means' of awakening missionary responsibility among all the baptised..."

[The Pontifical Mission Societies] help the faithful to recognise the fundamental importance of the missions and supporting our brothers and sisters in those areas of our world where the Church is young and growing.

Christ is our Saviour and in him we are one, a family of God, beyond the rich variety of our languages, cultures and experiences...

A renewed focus on the Church's unity and universality corresponds precisely to the authentic charism of the Pontifical Mission Societies."

SPUC congratulate Pope Leo XIV on his election and thank him for his lifelong defence of the unborn



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The whole parish family of The Immaculate Conception, Maryhill

sends our warmest greetings and congratulations to our new Pope, Pope Leo XIV.

As well as our congratulations, we also promise a daily prayer for his ministry.



Is it possible that I do all the right things for all the wrong reasons?

THE main character in T.S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral* is Thomas a Beckett, a bishop, who from every outward appearance is saint.

He is scrupulously honest, generous to a fault, and a defender of the faith who dies as a martyr.

Yet, at a certain point in his life, prior to his martyrdom, he recognizes that he might not be distinguishing between temptation and grace.

Many of us are familiar with how he famously expressed this:

The last temptation is the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason...

For those who serve the greater cause

May make the cause serve them.

What's the temptation here that can look like grace?

Simply put, we can be doing a lot of good for the wrong reasons!

Moreover, this can be enormously subtle; not least in those of us who serve the greater cause, because, as T.S. Eliot points out, it is easy to make the cause serve us.

How can we make the cause serve us? How can we be doing good for the wrong reasons?

Here's an example: I can be doing a lot of good things that help others and serve God's purpose here on earth. I can be generous to the



Scribblings of the spirit

Flourish's regular columnist, Fr Ronald Rolheiser offers practical insights each month into improving our spiritual lives

point of martyrdom. However, what if I am doing this (serving the greater cause) mainly because it makes me feel good, makes me feel moral and righteous, draws respect, earns me praise and admiration, and will leave behind me a good name?

These questions probe the difference between temptation and grace.

I can be doing the right things and, while not doing them for a bad reason, I can still for the most part be doing them for myself. I can be making the cause serve me more so than I am serving the cause.

The late Jesuit Michael J. Buckley (one of the major spiritual mentors in my life) pushes us to make a painful examination of conscience on this.

Am I doing things to serve God and others or am I doing them to make myself look and feel good?

In his book *What Do You Seek? The Questions of Jesus as Challenge and Promise*, Buckley writes this: "For, in a thousand ways, those who serve the greater cause may make the cause serve them.

"This can be enormously subtle. Sometimes a nuance at the initial formulation of an action or of a life can work the unexpected twist, the unrealized but profound reorientation so that zeal masks a hidden but vicious ambition; it is hidden because ambition and zeal, however profoundly contradictory, can look initially so much alike.

"The desire to get something achieved can mix the intrinsic worth of a project with the reflected glory of the accomplishment."

Winner

As a priest, in ministry for more than 50 years, I find this a particularly challenging prism through which to examine myself and my years of ministry. How much have I served the greater cause and how much have I, blind to self, made it serve me? Who is the bigger winner here: God and the church or me and my good name?

Granted, motivation is tricky to discern and this side of eternity is rarely pure. We are a bundle of mixed motivations, some



which serve others and some which serve ourselves; and, as Buckley astutely points out, initially they can look very much alike.

Moreover, certain sayings of Jesus seem to suggest that sometimes explicit motivation is less important than actually doing the right thing.

For example, Jesus says that it is not necessarily those who say 'Lord, Lord' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but it is those who in fact do the will of the Father on earth who will enter the kingdom. As well, in teaching that we will ultimately be judged on the basis of how we treated the poor (Whatsoever you do to the poor, you do to me), notice that neither group, those who did it right and those who did it wrong, knew explicitly what they were doing. They were re-

warded or punished solely on the basis of their actions. (Matthew 25)

So, can we be doing the right things for the wrong reasons? And, indeed, if we are doing them for less than purely altruistic reasons (approval, respect, a good name, good feelings about ourselves) how bad is this?

Does it denigrate or destroy the good we are doing? Is the desire for respect, a good name, and good feelings about ourselves genuinely at odds with altruism? Might the two befriend each other? Is God judging us more by our motivation than by our actions?

Am I serving the greater cause or am I having it serve me? That is a critical question for self-reflection. Why? Because it is easy to be blind to our own hypocrisy, even as it is just as easy to be too hard on ourselves.

Vatican launches new guide to help us 'sing with the Pope'... in Latin!

THE Vatican has launched a new initiative to teach Catholics worldwide how to sing parts of the Mass in Latin, using Gregorian chant as a means to help people participate actively in the liturgy.

The Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music has launched its "Let's Sing with the Pope" initiative as a series of short educational video tutorials to make Gregorian music accessible to everyone.

The institute described Gregorian chant as a "rich heritage" and a "universal musical and spiritual language" which is still used all over the world at sol-

BY RONNIE CONVERY emn liturgies in parishes and cathedrals and especially in Papal Masses.

The new Pope, Leo XVI, has demonstrated a strong singing voice in his first celebrations of Mass in Latin, and surprised everyone at his first Regina Coeli message by singing the Easter anthem in the original Gregorian chant and encouraging the crowd to join in.

In the initial video of the series, Father Robert Mehlhart, OP, the rector of the pontifical institute, demonstrated how the greeting of the Mass is sung by both the celebrant

and the assembly.

The aim is to "help the people of God sing along with the Holy Father during the upcoming major liturgical celebrations," the institute said.

Students

The Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music was founded by Pope Pius X in 1910 and has 153 students from 44 countries, some of whom led the singing at Pope Leo XIV's inaugural Mass last month.

■ You can access the lessons online at <https://www.facebook.com/reel/2108220129656668>



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ART OF THE MONTH

Casting out our nets with Pope Leo

WITH the election of Pope Leo XIV, the Church finds herself once again hearing those words spoken to Simon Peter on the Sea of Galilee: "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." (Luke 5:4)

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

This month's work of art is "The Net" painted by the Slovak Jesuit priest and artist Fr Peter Girašek SJ who reflected in a recent letter, "the net is empty but it is the obedience to God's word, namely Jesus' word, 'cast the net...' which makes it fruitful."

Fr Peter notes: "It is the faith of the Church which transforms the mere opportunity into experience of God's active presence. Our emptiness becomes fullness once giving primacy to God's acting. In a way, it resembles the Eucharist where our empty hands offer bread and wine to be, via God's word, transformed into God's presence."

"The Net reminds us of Christ's *kenosis* (self-emptying). As we read in the scriptures, 'He emptied himself'. An Empty Net does not mean a kind of vacuum,

but rather readiness, to be at disposal... One may say, Christ himself is the net to be cast out. He is the Way in whom to approach our world. The Net is not meant to kill, but to save."

The act of casting out our nets – obediently, faithfully, perhaps even hesitantly – is done at the Lord's command.

The sea is neither calm nor stormy, it is restless, alive, mysterious, suggestive of the modern world in all its uncertainty.

Weight

The net is stretched taut, from the heavy weight of unseen fish or, as the Gospel would have it, of souls.

The apostles are faceless, yet their presence is felt as they lean into the work, not with certainty, but with faith. The sea beneath moves with all the chaos and potential of the world itself. The net, stretched and burdened, becomes a symbol of the Church: fragile yet strong, able to gather without breaking.



Peter Girašek, *The Net*

It is an act of obedient casting, when Peter does something that by every worldly measure seems fruitless, but he does it anyway because the Lord has said so.

Like Simon Peter, Cardinal Robert Prevost was summoned by the Lord's

voice speaking through the centuries: "You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18).

Pope Leo XIV now takes up Peter's work in this same spirit. He inherits not only the barque of Peter, but the net – the task of evangelis-

ing a weary world, not in human strategy, but with trust in Christ's word.

Obedience

His election invites the whole Church to cast again, even after long nights of struggle. Fr Girašek's painting reminds us that the

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Lord Jesus Christ,
You called Peter to cast the net
once more,
not in confidence, but in faith.
At Your word, he obeyed—and
was not disappointed.
Grant us, and Pope Leo XIV,
the same courage to trust You
in deep waters.
Unite Your Church in the
labour of love, and draw all
people to the safety of Your
embrace.

Amen.

Church does not cast the net for approval, applause, or ease, but in obedience to the voice of the Lord. And whenever she does so faithfully, the miracle follows. Like Peter, Pope Leo says: "At your word, Lord, we will let down the nets" and surely miracles will follow!

The challenges of making our parishes child-friendly

IF, as the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child, what does it take to raise a child of Faith?

I'll venture to suggest it takes a triumvirate. At least one parent who is committed to the Faith, a Catholic school, and a parish.

As a grandmother of nine with another one on the way, I've got skin in this game. I'm also a parishioner of a parish blessed with a healthy dose of young families.

Having a primary school, especially as it's just round the corner, also gives us a head start. As well as proximity for Masses and visits from the children it's great for parents organising initiatives such as the after-school Rosary on a Friday.

Who's to say what our parish will look like in 10 years. Looking around at Sunday Mass I can only feel confident it will be an even more vibrant community of faith.

With parishes like ours there is cause for hope for the future and every reason to work to make things even better. It's not an easy gig – for the parents who

are on edge and the clergy and parishioners who at the 10.30 Sunday Mass don't simply tolerate the children but actively welcome them.

If there are small children in your orbit you'll appreciate, more often than not, they are high octane. Child-rearing, fortunately, has long since moved on from the 'seen and not heard' days.

Wee ones are front and centre of family life, unlike when they were absorbed into daily life at home.

Quiet

It doesn't make for quiet mini-Mass-attenders.

With under-fives it's largely just your luck. Some sit quietly, others make their presence known. Let's not forget the children with additional needs.

I have the privilege in being involved in SPRED where acceptance is the byword and there's a lesson there for all of us.

There is no getting around the fact that attending families are in the minority so making them welcome is essential.



Little children are inherently noisy and expressing themselves is what they are meant to do. But here's something to consider. Sometimes the noise they make is actually about the Mass.

We have a two and a half year old whose father has gently and patiently explained the Consecration to her in the simplest possible terms. Now when the bell rings, she's like an Evangelical as she sings "Jesus is coming."

That kind of engagement comes at a price. She's just as likely to give an animating monologue about her favourite cartoon charac-

ter of the moment. You get what you get with our girl.

Our similarly aged grandson's favourite colour is purple so Lent was a delight for him. Still a way off his second birthday, every week he was shouting "priest, purple."

He's of the better behaved variety of toddler and recently he accompanied his parents in the offertory procession. Either way both children, like so many I see, are being nurtured in their Faith and that should be supported.

I watch parents stop at the side altars after receiving Holy Communion to let their children light a

Mary's musings

Flourish columnist
Mary McGinty's monthly musings on faith and family



candle. This kind of commitment takes effort and parents need all the backing the parish community can give.

Families quickly get a sense of how welcome they are and they make a judgement call based on that. I've spoken with parents who found it all too much and have taken a break until the children are a wee bit older. Of those parents, and to be fair, it's only a small sampling, all of them have got out the habit and haven't yet returned to Sunday Mass.

If distraction or annoyance becomes an issue, and it's felt by parents, it all too soon won't be a problem because the families will go elsewhere, or sadly not at all.

Cry chapels work for some. The downside is

when the parents attempt the move to the body of the congregation which, if they have several children, can be after a span of years.

Behaviour patterns have been set and they are hard to break. There's always the option of the porch but with its doors open and likely perishing in winter it's hardly a good bet. In these days of diversity and inclusivity it screams marginalisation.

At the Sign of Peace the little children who go round proffering their hands to anyone who will shake them are their own signs of grace. No more than toddlers, unwittingly they are the purest signs of Faith.

The more children, the more noise, the more hope for the future. Our very own little Pilgrims of Hope.

Let's turn our focus to the great feasts of June



Fr Tom Kilbride

Parish Priest of Christ the King, Glasgow

OUR Easter season, with its joys and graces, sacramental celebrations, and feasts is over for another year.

Of course, it has been a particularly poignant and momentous time for us all this year, with the death of Pope Francis, the conclave and the election of Pope Leo. There has been much to pray about, much to reflect on and much to celebrate.

However, our Sunday liturgies don't let us return to the "ordinary" just yet, as each Sunday in June presents us with a particular solemnity. It will be into July before we see a Sunday in green vestments!

Trinity Sunday, Year C

As we emerge from Eastertide and our celebration over these weeks of all that God has done for us in the Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and the sending of the Holy Spirit, today we pause to praise God as God, a communion of persons in perfect love and unity, in whose image we are made. The readings all reflect the key idea that while God reveals and acts in various ways there is always perfect harmony.

The "Wisdom of God" (First Reading) – which is sometimes related to the

Son (the Word) and sometimes to the Holy Spirit – speaks of God's creative activity in the world. God "rejoices" in that creativity, "delighting" in being part of our world. Paul knows that the world can also be a place of suffering, however, but he knows too that God has given us the way to find peace in it, through Jesus who suffered with and for us and through the Holy Spirit who has filled us with God's love.

In the Gospel, Jesus himself notes that the Holy Spirit continues the work he began, his mission from the Father. He will bring us to "all the truth", deepening God's word as we have heard it from Jesus and empowering us to understand it, speak it and share it.

Corpus Christi, Year C

The offering the mysterious figure of Melchizedek makes to Abram (First Reading) is a very early pointer to the Eucharist. As a priest, his seemingly simple gift of bread and wine prophesies Jesus' priestly action at the Last Supper (of which the Second Reading reminds us).

The gift of abundant food in the Gospel also points ahead to the gift which Jesus will leave us. He feeds the crowd with physical



food, but later he will leave his disciples something far greater: the gift of himself, his Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine, the eternal covenant he establishes on the Cross.

We are celebrating Christ's Body and Blood in the feast, his presence and his gift to us to strengthen us in all we undertake. We are not just "reminded" of him, as if we are only doing as Melchizedek did, but we receive the fullest blessing possible, as he comes to us himself, transforming the

simple bread and wine we offer into something wonderful, something eternal, which then transforms us and makes us more like him every time we receive it!

Saints Peter and Paul

Before we resume our normal Sunday cycle, we celebrate the feast of the two greatest apostles of the early Church. One, the fisherman and companion of Jesus, witness to everything he said and did, entrusted with the care of the Church after Jesus' departure; the other, a "convert", blessed with an experience of the Risen Jesus which transformed him into an energetic, unstoppable missionary and teacher of the faith. Both gave their lives in Rome in ultimate witness to their Lord.

Two sets of readings are offered (Vigil and Sunday). The first set focusses on the ministry of each (Peter preaching through a share in Jesus' healing power, Paul describing how it all began for him), while the second perhaps suggests the challenges each faced (Peter in prison and Paul reflecting back on the race he ran and his confidence that the Lord will help him face

ing in the mission given to us, may we be inspired by the faith and confidence of Peter and Paul! Perhaps today, too, we might pray for Pope Leo, as he takes up his mission both as Peter's successor as bishop of Rome and as teacher of the nations like Paul.

14th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C

As July begins, we return to our "Year C" cycle guided by St Luke's Gospel. And we do so with a story of mission, one of Luke's major themes.

The seventy-two are sent out to prepare people for their encounter with Jesus. Their message is the closeness of the Kingdom of God (whether or not the message is welcomed) and, like the Risen Jesus, their first words are to be words of peace to those who are ready to receive it.

The First Reading deepens our reflection on this as Isaiah prophesies peace for God's suffering people. Their activity is shared (in pairs) and simple, without distractions or unnecessary extras. Their reward is the glory of eternal life.

The mission of the seventy-two is ours today: to prepare people to encounter Jesus, to bring them the Good News of the Kingdom of God and to offer them the peace only he can bring us. Paul knows not everyone will listen or accept the message, and that might be the cross we carry in our evangelising mission, but he prays for peace, mercy and blessing on those who take it up.

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Fond memories of student days

WE recently had a very pleasant visit from Archbishop Nolan to St Mungo's Parish and to the Passionist Community.

Since his installation in February 2022, the Archbishop, whenever he has had a free weekend, has been making his way round all the parishes in the archdiocese for a visit.

The visit was a fraternal, and mostly informal one. Archbishop Nolan celebrated and preached at all our weekend Masses, greeting people outside the church before and after each Mass, and joining the people who came in for tea and coffee after the midday Mass on Sunday.

After the Saturday Vigil, he came out to stay the night with the Passionist Community at Bishopbriggs, enjoying a simple supper, and then kindly agreeing to watch the Champions League Final with us, even



Fr Frank's log

Fr Frank Keevins CP is Parish Priest of St Mungo's Townhead

though he has little interest in football. It's a pity the match turned out to be so one-sided.

After lunch on Sunday, he led a slightly more formal meeting with the community, engaging in topics such as synodality, evangelisation, and the upcoming Passionist Provincial Chapter. After the 7pm Sunday night Mass, Archbishop Nolan returned home to St Pat's in Anderston. We enjoyed his visit, and I hope he did too. In the course of conversation during lunch on Sunday, the archbishop mentioned the names of a few priests in the archdiocese whom I was able to tell

him were students at the Scots College in Rome during the time I did my diaconate year at the Gregorian University, while staying at the Passionist Retreat of Saints John and Paul near the Colosseum.

This was in 1982-83. As it turned out, Archbishop Nolan had made his ordination retreat in Saints John and Paul back in 1977, just before he was ordained a priest for his home diocese of Motherwell.

Cassocks

The Scots students in my time were also studying at the Gregorian University, and were distinctive by their wearing of purple cassocks, and I became friendly with a number of them.

On many a Sunday I would be invited out to the Scots College (top right) for lunch – mince and tatties making a nice change from pasta. After lunch there would often be a viewing of some Celtic videos that had been sent to some of them by family or friends.

My abiding memory, though, was on Tuesday, 25th January, 1983. That day was the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul the Apostle,

and on that day in 1983, the Church's new Code of Canon Law was being promulgated in the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls, to replace the previous code of 1917.

However, for Scots, January 25th is also Burns Night. And so, while the new code was being promulgated, I was out at the Scots College, enjoying a wonderfully traditional celebration of Burns Night, with the haggis being piped in and addressed, followed by poetry and song from some very talented seminarians; and haggis, neeps and tatties to our heart's content.

It's a night I will always remember, and while I haven't really kept up contact with any of the guys over the years, I really valued their friendship at the time, and have met a few of them since my return to Glasgow in 2016.

The memory is still fresh, and it's hard to believe that we have all either reached, or are fast approaching, retirement age in the archdiocese, which is 75.

Being a Passionist religious, I'm not sure whether that retirement age will apply to me when I reach 75 in just over a year's time, or whether I will be soldiering on for as long as I am able. It's all in God's hands.

As ever, protect yourself, your loved ones and others, and protect Christ in your lives.



Mass at the Scots College in Rome

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The terrifying reality of being a child refugee in the UK today

THEY are words that should never need to be spoken in this "civilised" 21st century of ours.

But the late Pope Francis said them, meant them, repeated them. And now we must carry them forward if we are to make a difference in this world.

He said, "Children are not numbers. They are faces. Names. Stories. And each one is sacred," and this came to mind when I explored the regulations the UK government has in place for refugees (let's not even think about its xenophobic attitude to migrants).

What was instigated in the autumn of last year all sounded very supportive. Asylum seekers could send for their immediate family to join them in the UK – a partner and children.

That doesn't work for child refugees, however. Children – youngsters



with names and appalling back stories – are denied the right to sponsor family members and reunite them in a safe space.

Families Together is a coalition comprising over 100 organisations, including the Refugee Council, working to change these regulations and to reintroduce legal aid so that children

stand a sporting chance of getting their families back together.

I don't want to even imagine the comments on social media from those who believe the UK is being "swamped" by refugees (that negative word favoured by politicians and some news outlets), but there is a response to the nay-sayers.

According to the United Nations, "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." (Article 16, paragraph 3, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.)

While there are more than 47 million child refugees worldwide, they are not all trying to get into the UK and no, they don't see the UK as the best place to go because it is a "soft touch" – a phrase used time and again.

In 2023 (we don't yet have figures for last year), 3,412 unaccompanied children applied for asylum in this country.

Can you imagine their situation?

First, they are going to have to convince the UK authorities that they are 16 or under. They are going to try to do that at worst without a smidgeon of English, at



Marian Pallister

The chair of Pax Christi Scotland focuses on the issues of the day

best in English learned in school, disrupted by everything from power cuts to marauding militia and bombs.

They possibly don't know where their parents and siblings are, and only a granny or an auntie remain as "family". They too may be in very unsafe situations. Children with names, stories, each one sacred – and yet we put them through a second hell after they have escaped the unimaginable.

I have spent time in refugee camps in Kosovo and in the Far East. I have had children take my hand in theirs and follow my every

step as I interviewed camp authorities, grown up refugees. Their loss, their fear, their hope that I might be the one to get them out of this hell, still breaks my heart.

Every refugee, child or adult, is made in the image of God. They belong with whatever family remains to them. We commit a violence against them if we deny them that right.

Pope Leo has shown enormous compassion for refugees in his work in Peru. May he now touch the hearts of politicians in Westminster and around the world.

Hope in the most troubled of times

THE Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has had a short but troubled existence, but the last six months may have been some of its darkest days yet.

Ethnic disputes, corruption and fighting over land and precious mineral resources lie at the heart of decades of armed conflict.

The context is made worse by multiple disease outbreaks, natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

Since the start of 2025, fighting between M23 rebels and government forces resulted in the M23 armed group taking control of large parts of north and south Kivu, including the capital Bukavu where four of SCIAF's partners are based.

SCIAF has been working in the Eastern part of the country for almost 25 years on complex but transformative projects. Our work in the country has focused on areas in-

cluding combatting sexual and gender-based violence and providing holistic care for survivors, vocational training for youth to sustainably earn an income, sustainable agriculture, peacebuilding, women's empowerment, and helping people to prepare and recover from humanitarian catastrophes.

Over that time, we have built strong and respectful bonds with our local partners to transform lives and build better futures for the communities we work in. Worryingly, the day to day lives of our local partners and the communities they serve have been rocked by the recent escalation in violence.

Even before the current crisis, there were already an estimated 3.8 million people internally displaced by conflict in Eastern DRC.

Since January alone over 738,000 people have had to flee and there are many casualties and widespread human rights abuses be-

ing committed against aid workers and civilians.

Women and children are most affected with the UN citing levels of sexual violence and rape "surpassing anything we have seen in recent years". Needs are vast – many people require food, water, shelter, hygiene and urgent health care.

Despite recent discussions towards a draft peace agreement the daily situation remains fragile.

The economic situation is also a cause of great concern; banks have been closed since mid-February so in many cases people can't access their salaries or money; there is ongoing insecurity and armed clashes.

Tragically, the recent fighting has forced many international development organisations to leave the region, although some Church organisations are managing to reach out to the most vulnerable in this dire situation.



Louise during a visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo

BY LOUISE JOYCE
PROGRAMME OFFICER, SCIAF

While some of our project activities have been temporarily put on hold for safety reasons, partners have quickly adapted to the new context. Only last month we delivered vital food, essential household and hygiene items such as cooking pots,

soap and menstrual pads as well as medical equipment and trauma counselling to survivors of sexual violence.

Our partners are also finding host families in communities for those who find themselves without a roof over their head.

This work is vital to support people's survival but also to improve people's

health, well-being, dignity and resilience.

Our partners have found strength from SCIAF's continued show of solidarity, ongoing pastoral care, prayers and commitment to work alongside them during these challenging times. Please remember our sisters and brothers in the DRC in your thoughts and prayers.

Stay connected!



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Photo by Simon Murphy.



Small business owners, DRC, January 2020